DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 583 CS 011 064

AUTHOR Evans, Deborah J.
TITLE Increasing Instructional Options for the Teaching of Reading and Writing through Staff Development.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 43p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Effectiveness; Program Descriptions; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Writing Relationship; *Staff Development; Theory Practice Relationship; *Whole Language Approach; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Trade Books

ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to increase the instructional options chosen by classroom teachers in order to create meaningful connections between reading and writing for elementary students. Teachers in the target school were experiencing difficulty in translating theory into effective classroom practice. In response to a teacher needs assessment, four key areas of focus were identified and four corresponding workshops specifically geared to teacher grade levels, and including references to the textbook series in use, were developed. The workshops were: (1) What is Whole Language? (2) Integrating Reading and Writing; (3) Whole Class Instruction; and (4) Combining Trade Books with the Basal. Practical handouts accompanied each workshop. A list of trade books that related to concepts and themes in their math series was particularly popular. Classroom visitations and individual meetings were arranged, and professional books, articles and video tapes were also made available. Outcomes were positive, with all the practicum goals being met. All teachers demonstrated the use of several new teaching strategies. Central office administrators became interested and involved in the practicum. (Thirty-six references and an appendix containing the teacher survey are attached.) (Author/SR)

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ED350583

Increasing Instructional Options for the Teaching of Reading and Writing Through Staff Development

by

Deborah J. Evans

Cluster XXXVI

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A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Deborah J. Evans under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

August 15, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

William W. Anderson, Ed.D.
Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank Judith DeStefano Anen and Wayne Matthews for their cooperation and willingness to open their building to this writer. Without their on-going support and follow-up, this practicum could not have been successful. She would also like to thank her practicum advisor, Dr. William W. Anderson for his encouragement, support and guidance.

ABSTRACT

Increasing Instructional Options for the Teaching of Reading and Writing Through Staff Development. Evans, Deborah, 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Classroom Techniques/Elementary Education/Inservice Training/Instructional Practices/Reading Writing Relationship/Staff Development

This practicum was designed to increase the instructional options chosen by classroom teachers to create meaningful connections between reading and writing for elementary students. Teachers in the target school were experiencing difficulty in translating theory into effective classroom practice despite a growing awareness of ineffective practice in literacy instruction, interest in change and building level administrative support.

Three goals were set. The first goal was to create practices that would support and nurture the effective development of literacy instruction. The second goal was to see teachers implement these practices within their classrooms. The third goal was to encourage planned, ongoing staff development for administrators and teachers. In response to a teacher needs assessment, four key areas of focus were identified. Workshops specifically geared to teacher grade levels, and including references to the textbook series in use were developed by the writer. They were (1) What Is Whole Language? (2) Integrating Reading and Writing (3) Whole Class Instruction and (4) Combining Trade Books With The Basal. Practical handouts accompanied each workshop. A list of trade books that related to concepts and themes in their math series was particularly popular. Classroom visitations and individual meetings were arranged, and professional books, articles and video tapes were also made available.

Outcomes were positive. Although teaching habits often change slowly, all the goals of this practicum were met. All teachers demonstrated the use of several new teaching strategies. Central Office administrators became interested and involved in this practicum. Plans are currently in progress to expand these practices to the other district elementary schools.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iv
ABSTRACT.....v

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION..... 1

Description of Work Setting and Community..... 1
Writer's Work Setting and Role..... 3

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM..... 4

Problem Description..... 4
Problem Documentation..... 5
Causative Analysis..... 6
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature..7

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS.....10

Goals and Expectations.....10
Performance Objectives.....10
Measurement of Objectives.....12
Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events.....13
Description of Plans for Analyzing Results....13

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY.....15

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions15
Description and Justification for Solution Selected.....18
Calendar Plan.....20

V RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....22
Results.....22
Conclusions.....26
Recommendations.....31
Dissemination.....32

REFERENCES.....33
APPENDIX.....36
A TEACHER SURVEY.....37

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This practicum problem- solving experience took place in a public school district that is located on the northeastern seaboard and serves approximately 5,000 students. The students represent a cross-section of economic, racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. There are four K-6 schools, a grade 7-8 school and a high school. Each school has a principal and assistant principal with the exception of the high school which has three assistants.

The positions of Director of Reading, Math Coordinator, and Guidance Director were eliminated within the past two years. The responsibilities were assumed by the Assistant Superintendent in charge of the elementary schools. Within a year he retired, as did the Superintendent. A new Superintendent of Schools was hired in the spring of 1991. One of the elementary principals was promoted to Assistant Superintendent.

The student population is diverse. Approximately half of the students in one school are African-American or Latin American. The school personnel represent a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds as well. The majority of the

staff members have been employed by the district for ten or more years.

The district is very traditional. A great deal of time has been spent in efforts to improve standardized test scores. An overreliance on commercially prepared publisher's tests existed as well. Teachers were held strictly accountable for their students' scores and progress through their textbook series. Promotion and retention policies were based on benchmarks in the basal reading series.

The new Central Office administration is eager to create improvements in the system. The Assistant Superintendent is always available, aware of the problems, and willing to take steps to improve the current situation.

The building principal in the target school of this practicum is new. This is his second year as a principal, having served within the district as an assistant principal for a number of years. He is student-centered and committed to helping children develop literacy although he does not have a background in reading/writing.

The assistant principal in this building is also new. She just completed a year in her position, having been a reading specialist at another elementary school in the district. She is extremely knowledgeable about reading/writing and is the driving force here. She is also a Nova University colleague.

The other elementary principals have been in their

positions a number of years. Several were promoting a lock step approach to reading. One stated he was afraid the principals were sending mixed messages to the teachers.

Reading specialists and classroom teachers offer various philosophies, beliefs and practices in their work with children. They are using a 1979 language arts textbook and a 1987 reading series.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

This writer has worked with this school district for the last five years as a consultant from the publishing company that provided their basal reading series. In-service support has been requested continuously but change has come very slowly.

Last year an inservice project to reduce overreliance on the basal text in first grade yielded positive and encouraging results.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The district tends to be very conservative and slow to change. However, one elementary school has taken more initiative and has been willing to try some new practices. The faculty of this school was the target group of this practicum. There is some evidence that teachers in this school were making attempts to connect language learning in their classes however there was frustration. Teachers were not confident in their change efforts.

Building administrators, the reading specialist and classroom teachers were attempting to change but found the process slow and difficult. The requirements of the district were in stark contrast to generally recognized principles of effective pedagogy.

In summary, teachers in the target school were having difficulty translating theory into effective classroom practice despite growing awareness of ineffective practices in literacy instruction, interest in change and building-level administrative support. Administrative control over teachers has been so tight and risk-taking has been discouraged for so long that teachers have difficulty moving beyond their fears.

Problem Documentation

The district required students to have completed certain portions of particular books in the basal reading series to be "on grade level." Retention and promotion were based on the work students did in this series. The district report cards are skill based.

Writing was not valued. Writing folders were not kept or required. Classrooms and hallways did not display children's writing. Standardized achievement tests and those published to accompany the basal reading series were the only sanctioned methods of assessment.

Last year the target elementary school offered staff development for first grade teachers who were interested in transitioning into a literature-based reading/writing program. This year they requested assistance in providing staff development for the rest of the faculty.

Responses to a voluntary needs assessment (see Appendix A) were positive, with 18 of the 23 teachers offering their input. **What Is Whole Language?** and **Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction** were rated as workshops that would have great value to 16 of the 18 respondents. **Whole Class Instruction (Including the Basal)** and **Combining Trade Books With the Basal** were workshops rated to be of great value by 15 of the 18 respondents. Learning more about **Current Trends in Reading Instruction** was a topic of interest to 11 of the

18 respondents .

In response to the question, "Is there an area you would like assistance with?," teachers cited implementing a whole language approach, integrating reading and writing, offering workshops for teachers and working with children far below grade level as areas of need. One teacher requested time to visit classes that were using a whole language approach.

To date, the district had not offered any staff development along the lines requested above, with the exception of what this writer had provided voluntarily.

Causative Analysis

There are a number of possible causes for this problem. It is also likely that several factors contributed to this situation. Staff development is expensive. It requires planning and the commitment of time and financial resources to be effective. This district had not made this commitment prior to the implementation of this practicum.

Additionally, the district had a unified system of evaluation and reporting in place, however it did not support current research on effective instructional practices. It was also in stark contrast to the efforts in this one elementary school. The combination of these factors did not encourage effective instructional practice.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The process of change can be difficult and slow. Many researchers have encountered difficulties in trying to make educational changes through staff development. Gallagher, Goudvis and Pearson (1988) describe important principles of change in educational settings. They state, "If you want the people in an organization to change dramatically- to make major shifts in orientation or behavior- you have to adopt a problem solving, transactive client centered approach."(p.35) This comment lends support for why change had not occurred to this point. Meyer (1988) discusses the elements necessary to create lasting change in teacher techniques. She found that a combination of directed professional development coupled with the use of outside experts who were proficient enough to blend demonstrations, observations, and guided practice to be most likely to bring about successful changes. Grossnickle (1987) cautions that one shot inservice workshops are bound to fail. He offers valuable follow-up ideas to strengthen chances of success after inservice workshops. These include providing release time for teachers to visit other schools, obtaining reference and research materials, arranging for follow-up visits from the presenter, organizing an in-house support group, evaluating interest in expanding upon the information presented and identifying means to encourage, support and reward those who devote the extra time and effort to

improvement.

The role of the basal reader is another part of this problem. Evidence for and against the use of basals exists. McCallum (1988) took the "don't throw the basals out with the bath water" position. Farr (1988) took a best of both worlds position by showing how basals could be utilized with a whole language philosophy, while Goodman (1986) and Goodman, Shannon, Freeman and Murphy (1988) took a stronger whole language view, with little to no attention to basal readers. They believe that the misuse and overreliance of basal texts is due to an ingrained belief Americans have that technology can solve human problems. In many schools they have become so dominant that they have become the reading curriculum. They continue, "So strong is the trust in the basal technology that both teachers' and students' performance are judged by the basal manuals and their objective referenced tests."(p. iv)

Recently classroom teacher research has been getting wide attention. In her book first book, Routman (1988) described her journey toward a literature-based curriculum over several years. In the companion volume, Routman (1991), continues the journey and begins by discussing the natural stages involved in the change process. These two books have great value for those in the process of changing. Many insightful, frustrating and painful experiences were shared that will support and lend confidence to others.

Butler & Turbill (1987) describes the experiences of two

teachers in New Zealand as they endeavored to develop a reading-writing curriculum. Graves (1991) is another researcher who has conducted many studies with classroom teachers and has also encouraged teachers to become problem solvers through their own research. He is also a strong advocate of teacher collaboration. When teachers share their experience it encourages a supportive networking system.

Traditional studies have been done on this subject as well. Durkin (1984) found that most teachers assigned all the practice workbook pages and copymasters available. Bacharach and Alexander (1986), working along similar lines to Durkin found that it may not be the fault of the materials, but the application of them. They found that only half of the 31 classroom teachers observed used any of the prereading questions, while none used the suggestions for building background. Duffy, Roehler and Putnam (1987) were perplexed by the difference between what their graduate students were taught and what they did in actual practice. The results of this study were not promising since teachers seemed to go against what they knew was right in favor of what the norm was in their teaching situations.

Prince and Mancus (1987) also found that teachers did not tend to use the creative, interactive ideas in their teacher manuals. Enrichment activities, in particular, were likely to be overlooked.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

There were three major goals. The first was to create practices that support and nurture the effective development of literacy. The second was to implement instructional practices that support the first goal. Finally, staff development must become planned and ongoing for administrators and teachers.

Performance Objectives

Performance objectives are outlined here to insure that all efforts aim to meet the goals described above.

1. By the end of the first month of this implementation all 23 classroom teachers were to report daily self-selected sustained silent reading in their classrooms for a minimum of fifteen minutes and the principal, assistant principal and reading specialist reported specific activities in support of this practice.

2. By the end of the first month of this implementation all 23 teachers would report daily read-aloud sessions of at least ten minute duration with their students. This would

be documented by self-reports, and writer observation.

3. By the end of the third month of the implementation period a visit to the school by this writer would reveal that 20 of 23 classrooms (grades 1-6 and special education) would have multiple examples of children's writing on display both in the hallway and in their rooms.

4. The end of the fourth month would be another benchmark. By this time, 18 of 23 teachers would integrate reading and writing on a weekly basis as revealed through reports by the assistant principal.

5. By the end of the fourth month, all 23 teachers would reveal through self-reporting that they regularly utilized prewriting strategies with their students.

6. All 23 teachers would have demonstrated the use of prediction strategies for reading nonfiction with their classes by the end of the sixth month. This would be documented by the classroom observation records of the principal and assistant principal.

7. At this time, all teachers in grades three through six would have utilized the K-W-L Strategy with their students and would report this to this writer.

8. In a visit to the school during the seventh month of this implementation period, multiple examples of graphic organizers should be seen by this writer in 18 of the 23 classrooms visited.

9. By the end of the implementation period, all 23 teachers should report integrating use of the basal with

trade books by author, genre or theme study and all 23 teachers were expected to contribute to a sharing file. Copies of the sharing file would be provided for all participants.

The expectation is that all 23 teachers would expand their awareness regarding the variety of effective classroom practices for developing literacy. This awareness should transfer into improving some practices and increasing the amount of time spent on the meaningful activities already in place.

Measurement of Objectives

Classrooms and hallways did not show evidence of daily writing. Displaying children's writing in classrooms and hallways on a regular basis would be a sign of change. Daily read-alouds and time for self-selected sustained silent reading were not the norm. If teachers were to include these sessions on a daily basis, a major change would be evident. Allowing and encouraging student generated writing is another positive change that could be used to measure teacher commitment. Student use of graphic organizers and specific strategies such as K-W-L and prediction would be additional signs of changes in instruction. Student use of the basal and trade books in combination for author, genre or theme study would be further evidence of change occurring. All of the above

changes would be readily apparent by visiting classes, and by talking to teachers, students and administrators.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

Flexibility was built into this plan. Change was expected. This writer kept a journal throughout the planning and implementing stages. Unforeseen events were recorded and reported by phone to the practicum advisor. If appropriate, the Director of Practicums was notified.

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

Ideally it would be great to see everyone change. However, given the time, situational, and resource constraints, this was not likely. This practicum focused on creating change in one of the four elementary schools. All teachers for grades one through six participated along with the reading specialist, special education teachers and two building administrators. This project required a long term effort. It was imperative that this writer remain a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on stage." Real change needed to come from within so it could be self- sustaining and rewarding after the implementation of this practicum. This school provided a model for the other schools in the district.

Comparisons were made between the state of instructional

practice before and after the implementation period. Measurement of the individual performance objectives were recorded. They are reported and discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem here was one of translating theory into everyday practice in the classroom. Chapter II described some of the problems other researchers have encountered that related to this problem. This chapter will focus on some of the possible solutions. Routman (1991, 1988) provides an excellent model for change in transitioning to a literature-based program. Butler and Turbill (1987) also offer tested and true ideas from their experience along the same lines. Still another book by teachers about the struggle to provide the best literacy instruction was written by Johnson and Louis (1987). It offers many ideas that can be used with or without a basal.

Slaughter (1988) offers many suggestions on the value of direct and indirect teaching in a whole language program. Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkenson (1985) make a number of valuable recommendations for improving classroom practices. Among these are the need to spend more time reading independently and more time writing, less time on skill sheets and workbooks, and daily read alouds by every

teacher. Allowing time for discussion and response to reading is also necessary.

Continuous staff development is another important recommendation. Gallagher, Goudvis, and Pearson (1988), Meyer (1988) and Grossnickle (1987) all recommended ongoing staff development that included input from the faculty regarding what they needed and supported the importance of planning staff development to be an ongoing process rather than a one shot inservice.

Zarrillo (1989) described five common elements of success with literature-based instruction. They are 1. the presentation of literature 2. children's response to literature 3. individualized time 4. teacher- directed lessons and 5. projects.

Choral reading, shared reading and the use of predictable books have been endorsed by Holdaway (1979), Heald-Taylor (1987a, 1987b), Trachtenburg and Ferruggia (1989), Bridge (1989) and many others. Martinez and Nash (1991) advocate seatwork alternatives through literature and provide support for the success of this approach.

Strickland (1990) provides compelling evidence for the importance of integrating reading and writing in a meaningful context. Spiegel (1988) also provides suggestions for teachers who are looking for alternatives to workbooks and worksheets.

Slavin, Madden and Stevens (1990) are among the researchers who has studied the effects of cooperative

learning and highly recommends it as a strategy. Harp (1989) recommended flexible grouping and cooperative learning as alternatives to ability grouping. Madden (1988) recommended cooperative reading teams as a strategy to aid poor readers and improve attitudes simultaneously. Uttero (1988) also recommended cooperative learning as a strategy to improve reading comprehension.

Dowhower (1989) suggested three ways to incorporate rereading into a reading program after reviewing the literature to verify its success. Worthington (1991) presented a paper at IRA which analyzed over 50 research studies that found that traditional ability grouping for reading was not the most effective way to teach reading. Varying the grouping arrangement to include some whole group instruction, some small group instruction, some peer-led groups and individual learning activites was most effective.

Strickland and Morrow (1989) compiled a collection of professional articles and suggestions for integrating reading and writing to develop emergent literacy in the classroom. Harste (1989) has reviewed over 500 studies of reading instruction. His book has great implications for staff development and connecting research and practice. He also recommends 20 policy guidelines that may be useful here.

The above ideas came directly from the work of other professionals and researchers. There were several other possibilities based on this specific situation. One

possibility was eliminating the use of the CAT in first grade. This was advisable because of the pressure the teachers feel in being held accountable for their students' scores. Another possibility was changing the Board policy to be more supportive of the research and trends in instruction. The third consideration involved the building reading specialists. The reading specialists needed to be involved. They are in the middle- between the principals and the teachers. They could play an important role in bringing about and maintaining lasting change.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

This writer was prepared to meet with the building level administrators and other interested individuals to plan staff development sessions. These sessions were to be set up based on the needs assessment results outlined in Chapter II. Recommendations for administrators and other elementary school teachers would be made if and when administrators were receptive. A recommendation for the district to join the statewide literacy network would also be made.

Specific steps would include a planning meeting with the school administrators to verify the workshop objectives and specific dates. Specific workshops would be conducted based on the teachers' needs assessments. Teacher and administrator feedback would be encouraged throughout this

process. Adjustments would be made accordingly (with advisor approval). Results would be shared with participants and other interested district personnel.

This particular solution strategy was planned for several reasons. First of all, the participants were cooperative and eager to make the described changes. This, in itself, was an important reason. However, the research cited in Chapters II and IV supported the proposed process. It was essential for the school district administrators, building administrators and teachers to have access to outside services but still maintain a strong degree of control over the direction, content and time spent on their staff development. Another reason in support of this strategy was the importance of working within one's own power base. As an outside consultant, this writer was required to work within the school's framework. Cooperation, communication and coordination with the participating school administration was essential. Finally, it was important to choose a strategy that could be implemented with a reasonable chance of success within the time frame of this practicum.

The following calendar outlines a plan to do this, achieving the goals and objectives set forth in Chapter III at the same time.

Projected Calendar Plan

1. Month 1
   - Meeting to verify dates and objectives
   - Workshop research and preparation
   - Workshop: **What Is Whole Language?**
   - School visit- Assess objectives 1 and 2
2. Month 2
   - Workshop preparation
   - Workshop: **Integrating Reading and Writing**
     - Primary- grades 1-2
     - Intermediate- grades 3-6
3. Month 3
   - Workshop preparation
   - Workshop: **Integrating Reading and Writing**
     - **Part II***
     - Primary
     - Intermediate
   - School visit- Assess objective 3
4. Month 4
   - Workshop preparation
   - Workshop: **Whole Class Instruction**
     - Primary
     - Intermediate
   - School visit- Assess objectives 4, 5 and 6

5. Month 5

   Workshop preparation

   Workshop: **Whole Class Instruction Part II***

      Primary

      Intermediate

6. Month 6

   Workshop preparation

   Workshop: **Combining Trade Books With the Basal**

      Primary

      Intermediate

   School visit- Assess objectives 7 and 8

7. Month 7

   Workshop preparation

   Workshop: **Combining Trade Books With the Basal**

      Part II*

      Primary

      Intermediate

   School visit- Assess objectives 9 and 10

8. Month 8

   Prepare Sharing File

   Summarize Findings

* signifies the second part of a workshop that will need more time than is allocated in one after school time slot

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

Results

The problem that existed in the target school was difficulty in translating theory into effective classroom practice despite the awareness of ineffective practices in literary instruction, interest in change and building-level administrative support. Many factors contributed to this problem. Cutting the funds for the Director of Reading position left the district lacking leadership from the Central Office in this area. A lack of planning and budgeting for staff development was another contributor. Finally, the antiquated system of student evaluation and student report card criteria was in stark contrast to current research findings regarding effective pedagogy for literacy instruction.

The proposed solution to this problem was to provide staff development for the teachers, enabling them to increase their instructional options for the teaching of reading and writing within their classrooms. Each teacher participated in a series of after- school workshops. Each teacher had been given the opportunity to participate in the selection of the workshop topics to insure interest and relevance to them. Teachers were provided with a series of

professional articles. Professional reference books, journals and videos were provided. Opportunities were made available for individual conferences and classroom visitations. This writer also provided each teacher with a list of trade books that correlated to the concepts and themes at each grade level in their math series. In addition to this, support was offered to the district administration.

The district administration became very interested in whole language. Consequently, in addition to the proposed solution strategy, this writer was asked to provide workshops for all elementary principals, assistant principals and reading specialists in the district. Significant district-wide change is currently in progress, in partial response to the efforts of this practicum. Another result of the district-wide administrative workshops was the inclusion of all elementary reading specialists at the series of workshops provided for the target elementary school staff. This served to significantly broaden the scope of this practicum from its targeted audience.

Three goals for this practicum had been set. The first goal was to create practices that would support and nurture the effective development of literacy instruction. The second goal was to see teachers implement these practices within their classrooms. The third goal was to encourage planned, ongoing staff development for administrators and teachers. Ultimately, the target school staff and

administration needed to develop ownership and take charge of their own staff development.

Nine specific objectives were set to achieve these goals. The teachers at the target school did not know what this writer's objectives were, other than to help them increase their options for reading/writing instruction. Here are the objectives and the corresponding results:

Objective 1: By the end of the first month of implementation it was expected that all 23 classroom teachers would report including self-selected sustained silent reading for a minimum of fifteen minutes each day. The school principal, assistant principal and reading specialist reported that all 23 teachers had demonstrated this practice.

Objective 2: By the end of the first month of implementation it was expected that all 23 classroom teachers would read aloud daily for at least ten minutes with their students. Teachers reported that they were reading aloud on a daily basis. Both the reading specialist and assistant principal provided verification that all 23 teachers read aloud daily. The school librarian reported that she was more frequently asked to recommend read-aloud books than before this implementation.

Objective 3: By the end of the third month of the implementation period it was expected that 20 of 23 classrooms would display multiple examples of children's writing both in the hallway and in each classroom. At this

time, a visit to the school showed that 22 of 23 teachers had met this objective.

Objective 4: It was expected that 18 of 23 teachers would be integrating reading and writing at least once a week by the end of the fourth month. The assistant principal reported that 22 of 23 teachers met this objective. Many teachers had become so excited they had decreased use of workbooks and worksheets on a voluntary basis. Student-generated writing had increased and many teachers reported the use of journal writing and reader response logs. At least half of the teachers were making an effort to integrate reading and writing on a daily basis.

Objective 5: All 23 teachers were expected to report the regular use of prewriting strategies with their students by the end of the fourth month of implementation. All teachers did report that they regularly used prewriting strategies by the end of the fourth month.

Objective 6: By the end of the sixth month all 23 teachers were expected to include the use of prediction strategies for reading nonfiction with their students. The records of the assistant principal indicated that all 23 teachers had met this objective.

Objective 7: By the end of the sixth month it was also expected that all 10 teachers in grades three through six would have utilized the use of the K-W-L Strategy with their students. Only six of the ten did report that they had used this strategy with their students.

Objective 8: In a visit to the school during the seventh month of implementation, this writer expected to see multiple examples of graphic organizers in 18 of the 23 classrooms. Actual examples of student use of graphic organizers were seen in 19 of the 23 classes.

Objective 9: By the end of the implementation period it was expected that all 23 teachers would report integrating the use of their basal with trade bcoks by author, genre or theme study and that they would all voluntarily contribute to the school sharing file. All 23 teachers did demonstrate their integration of the basal with trade books. Only 13 of the 23 did contribute to the sharing file. These 13 teachers did, however, contribute 36 ideas, activities and suggestions. The computer teacher and the school librarian offered their ideas for integration in their specialty areas as well. "What Works? Integrating Reading and Writing at Ella G. Clarke School" has been shared with all participants of this practicum.

Discussion and Conclusions

Qualitative and quantitative evidence was examined in determining the effectiveness of this practicum. The target population included 23 classroom teachers in one school. The reading specialist, assistant principal and principal were also important participants. Since the administrators chose to attend each workshop with the teachers, the message was clear that this was something everyone valued.

The agreement on the importance of these instructional practices became clearer after analyzing the responses to each objective. Prior to this implementation, teachers had expressed frustration that they were so accountable to testing that they could not do what they knew was right for the children. One of the results of this practicum was a schoolwide change of attitude. Teachers started to trust themselves once again and felt freer to take risks.

Each teacher expressed the pleasure they and their students felt by including many sources of literature in their program, rather than the single use of the basal. Teachers and students alike enjoyed the daily self-selected silent reading and read alouds. One teacher reported that this did more to motivate her students to read than anything else she had tried. Several teachers reported that they discovered new books and points of view from their students. Still other teachers reported that the students were excited about their books and were more likely to discuss them with other students, even when not required by the teachers. Students were sharing and learning from each other, in addition to their work with their teachers.

Visible displays of student writing improved markedly during this practicum. This, third objective was met and exceeded. The same results occurred with the fourth objective. Once the teachers saw some of the instructional choices their administrators would support, a noticeable decrease in workbooks and worksheets occurred. When they

were secure in the knowledge that they did not have to use every workbook page and that sound alternatives were available to them, this practice diminished.

Many teachers had not been previously trained in process writing. This coupled with a language text that is almost fourteen years old, necessitated some work with prewriting strategies including their importance, use and some demonstration. All teachers responded by regularly including the use of prewriting strategies with their students.

Objective six was an easy objective to meet. Once the teachers understood the importance of prediction strategies and the way they could be used for fiction and nonfiction, they were able to identify the use of these strategies in their basal program. One outgrowth of this practicum was the change in activities selected within the basal reader teacher edition. By the end of the sixth month of this implementation period, all 23 teachers were including the use of prediction strategies for the reading of nonfiction with their students.

Due to some scheduling changes the school district imposed, this writer was not able to meet with all teachers in grades three through six to explore the uses of the K-W-L Strategy. Objective seven was not fully met, since six of ten (rather than all ten) teachers implemented the use of the K-W-L Strategy with their students. Time seemed to be the significant constraint here since the teachers who did

implement the strategy were impressed with its potential as a teaching tool and with the ease with which children chose to use it on their own.

The use of graphic organizers was popular, thus objective eight was met. It is likely that if these efforts are continued next year, the K-W-L Strategy will be added to the list of graphic organizers used by most of the teachers.

All teachers became interested in integrating reading and writing as well as making connections between content areas whenever possible. All teachers included the use of trade books with their basal usage. In an effort to help the staff expand their efforts, this writer provided the teachers with a list of trade books that correlated to the concepts and themes taught in their math series. This was well-received. Their interest was there, but they were very receptive to practical suggestions regarding actual classroom connections.

The culmination of this practicum was to be a sharing file that would include voluntary contributions from each teacher. Thirteen of the 23 contributed, so this objective was not met. This was done at the end of the year when teachers often are most concerned with end-of-the year details. No pressure was exerted to encourage them to participate and time was not allotted during the teacher workshops for writing their suggestions. Changes in any of these areas could have helped encourage participatiion. This writer felt that it was important to allow choice for

the teachers. This was a tool to help expand awareness in the variety of activities that work for students. The spirit of the goal was met. The networking, sharing and pride in instructional choices are the more important goals.

A review of the data shows that all objectives were not met at the levels initially proposed. Significant improvements did occur for each objective. The results do support this writer's conclusion that staff development can help to increase instructional options for teaching reading and writing. This writer concludes that this intervention was successful. The expectation was that the teachers would expand their awareness of effective classroom practices for developing literacy. This awareness was transferred into some effective classroom practices including an increase in time spent on meaningful, student-centered activities.

The interest in this practicum and consequent support from the Central Office administration extended the original scope of this practicum. This writer did not have the power base to make some of the changes that are now occurring due to this support. Many of these practices are being encouraged at all elementary schools. A district committee now exists that is exploring district policy and curriculum recommendations, including staff development needs.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that this staff development program be continued. Teachers need support, encouragement and time to share and brainstorm improvements in their practice.

2. It is recommended that all elementary school administrators continue to participate in ongoing staff development.

3. It is recommended that student report cards be changed to reflect current instructional practices.

4. It is recommended that CAT testing be eliminated for first graders.

5. It is recommended that alternative methods of assessing student writing be explored and implemented.

6. It is recommended that the district join the statewide Literacy Network.

7. It is recommended that a districtwide network be established and meet on a regular basis.

8. It is recommended that an in-house support group be organized within each school.

9. It is recommended that the district revise its promotion and retention policies to agree with the instructional practices currently encouraged.

10. It is recommended that teachers be encouraged to join professional associations, attend conferences and share with their colleagues.

11. It is recommended that the district identify a means to encourage, support and reward those who devote the extra

time and effort to improvement.

12. It is recommended that teacher observations and evaluations be aligned with these instructional practices.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum have been made available to the school administrators and teachers who participated. It is being shared throughout the district by the building reading specialists who attended all workshop sessions and are currently replicating many of the activities and practices within their own buildings. Results have also been shared with this writer's consultant colleagues who may encounter a similar situation. Two reading associations have requested presentations at their annual fall conferences based on the change strategies used. A brief journal article for administrators is also planned.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

TEACHER SURVEY

_____ _____
Name (optional) Grade

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey. This feedback will be helpful in planning some of your upcoming inservice workshops. Please return by Wednesday, November 6, 1991. Thanks!

Please rate the value these topics would have to you.

	Least value				Greatest value
Current Trends in Reading Instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction	1	2	3	4	5
What Is Whole Language?	1	2	3	4	5
Journal Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Working With Parents	1	2	3	4	5
Creating Reader Response Groups	1	2	3	4	5
Classroom Management for Flexible Grouping	1	2	3	4	5
Informal Assessment Including Portfolios	1	2	3	4	5
Whole Class Instruction (Including the Basal)	1	2	3	4	5
Combining Trade Books With the Basal	1	2	3	4	5
Using The Basal Most Effectively	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperative Learning	1	2	3	4	5
Other_____	1	2	3	4	5

In your classroom reading/writing instruction, what are you most pleased with?

Is there an area you would like assistance with? If so, what is it?